



## Information Card

### Carcass Processing and Disposal Facility

#### Issue

The proper disposal of carcasses and tissues from infected animals is an important part of the Veterinary Services mission. The process of alkaline hydrolysis offers a cost-effective and environmentally friendly method of disposal. The National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL), located in Ames, Iowa, currently has a large-scale carcass processing and disposal facility that can accomplish this task.

#### Background Information

The NVSL maintains a carcass/tissue digester that can process 7,000 lbs of animal carcasses/tissues per run. The carcasses/tissues are put into the digester, and the correlated amount of potassium hydroxide is added to achieve a 1N solution. The digester then heats up to 150°C and cooks for 6 hours (for carcasses/tissues with prion diseases) liquefying all the material. The pH is then adjusted to a safe level by adding glacial acetic acid to the slurry.



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### Background Information Continued

One full run of the digester yields about 2,000 gal of liquid. The liquid is then disposed of by one of three methods. Option 1: The liquid is knifed into the ground as fertilizer. Option 2: The liquid is transferred to a dehydrator where about 50 percent of the water is boiled off and the waste is then incinerated. Option 3: The liquid is directly incinerated without evaporation.

### For More Information

The digester is a safe and effective way to dispose of animal carcasses/tissues through the process of alkaline hydrolysis. The resulting liquid is disposed of through multiple channels. For questions about this process, contact Keith Davidson by phone at (515) 663-7095 or by e-mail at [Keith.L.Davidson@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:Keith.L.Davidson@aphis.usda.gov).

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